e Washington Post
Times Herald

Co. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1970 Phone 223-6000 Circulation 223-6100 Classified 223-6200 10c

Index 56 Pages 4 Sections

Amusements	B 4	Fed. Diary	D 8
City Life	C 1	Financial	D 6
Classified	C 5	Obituaries	C 4
Comics	B 8	Sports	D 1
Crossword	B 3	Style	B 1
Editorials	A14	TV-Radio	B12

Laird Warns of New Moves To Free POWs in N. Vietnam

Associated Press

Defense Secretary Laird shows senators a picture of a model of the Sontay prisoner of war camp, site of a weekend U.S. rescue attempt.

1st Foray Justified, Hill Told

U.S. Still Aims At Negotiated Peace, He Says

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States may take other "strong" and "unusual" measures to free American prisoners in North Vietnam, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird warned yesterday.

He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the recent deaths of 17 American prisoners in North Vietnam plus the desperate straits of those still alive justified the rescue raid launched this past weekend against the Sontay prison camp about 20 miles west of Hanoi.

The Defense Secretary, under often hostile questioning, rejected suggestions that President Nixon is giving up on negotiating peace and going for a military victory in Vietnam.

Laird insisted that the Saturday morning assault against Sontay and the weekend bombing of anti-aircraft sites and related facilities south of North Vietnam's 19th Parallel did not represent any change in administration policy.

Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D.-Ark.) said, "I don't see any way of getting those prisoners out—short of taking over the "country" (North Vietnam). Therefore, he argued, negotiation should be President Nixon's steadfast goal—not punitive actions like the weekend bombings nor commando-style raids on the ground.

"I'm more puzzled now than

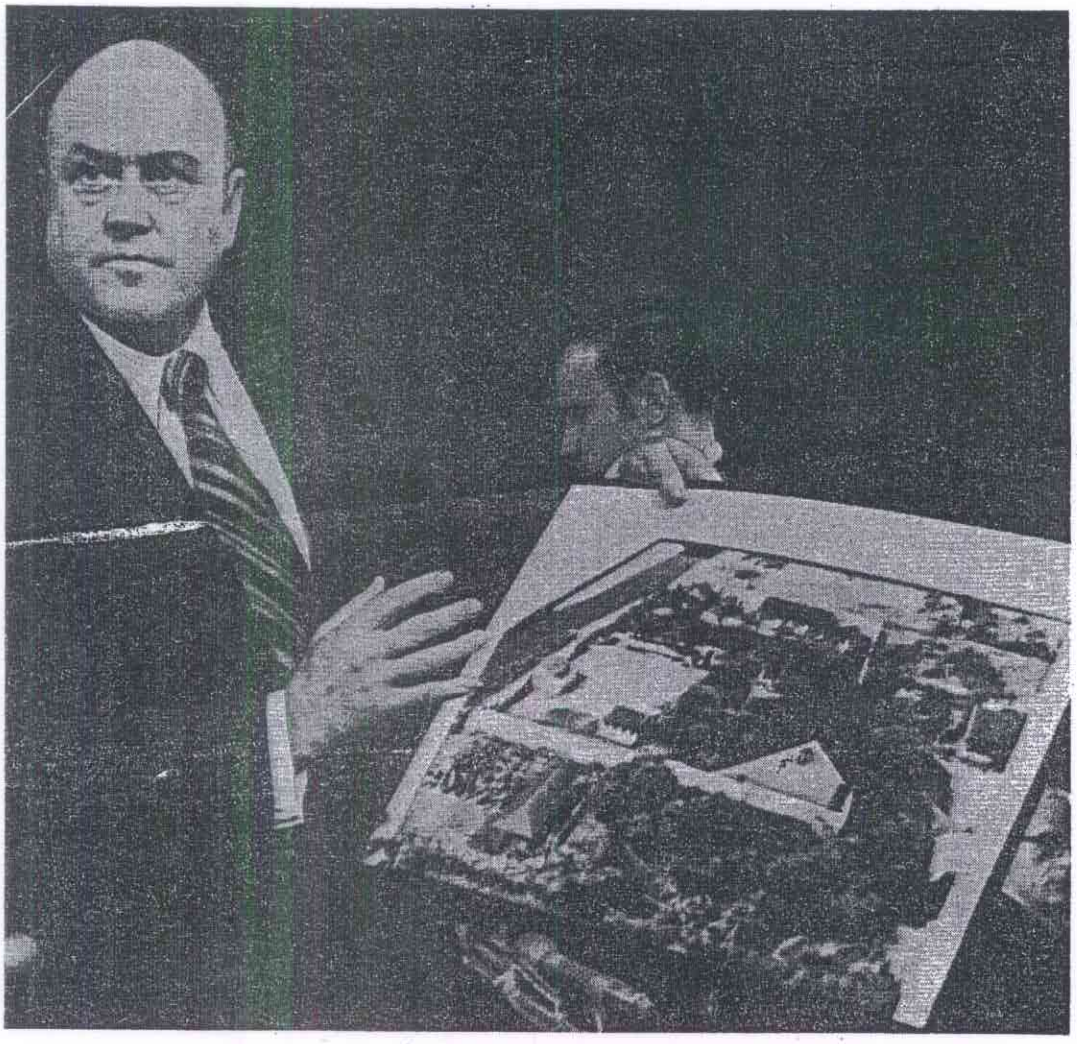
e Washington Post
Times Herald

Index 56 Pages 4 Sections

Amusements	B 4	Fed. Diary	D 8
City Life	C 1	Financial	D 6
Classified	C 5	Obituaries	C 4
Comics	B 8	Sports	D 1
Crossword	B 3	Style	B 1
Editorials	A14	TV-Radio	B12

Co. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1970 Phone 223-6000 Circulation 223-6100 Classified 223-6200 10c

Laird Warns of New Moves To Free POWs in N. Vietnam



Associated Press

Defense Secretary Laird shows senators a picture of a model of the Sontay prisoner of war camp, site of a weekend U.S. rescue attempt.

1st Foray Justified, Hill Told

U.S. Still Aims At Negotiated Peace, He Says

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States may take other "strong" and "unusual" measures to free American prisoners in North Vietnam, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird warned yesterday.

He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the recent deaths of 17 American prisoners in North Vietnam plus the desperate straits of those still alive justified the rescue raid launched this past weekend against the Sontay prison camp about 20 miles west of Hanoi.

The Defense Secretary, under often hostile questioning, rejected suggestions that President Nixon is giving up on negotiating peace and going for a military victory in Vietnam.

Laird insisted that the Saturday morning assault against Sontay and the weekend bombing of anti-aircraft sites and related facilities south of North Vietnam's 19th Parallel did not represent any change in administration policy.

Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D.-Ark.) said, "I don't see any way of getting those prisoners out—short of taking over the "country" (North Vietnam). Therefore, he argued, negotiation should be President Nixon's steadfast goal—not punitive actions like the weekend bombings nor commando-style raids on the ground.

"I'm more puzzled now than

before over what really this administration is going to do," Fulbright said of the weekend's two military actions.

Laird received a friendlier reception from the more hawkish Senate Armed Services Committee earlier in the day, with Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.) calling the rescue mission a "brilliant effort."

Stennis also sided with Laird in contending "the intelligence was just as good as it was possible for it to be." Other senators assailed the apparent intelligence gap that resulted in Army and Air Force volunteers risking their lives on a camp weeks after American prisoners had been taken away.

These were the main points Laird made in an interview after the Armed Services Committee's closed hearing and during the open questioning by the Foreign Relations Committee:

See LAIRD, A4, Col. 1

New Moves Seen To Rescue POWs

LAIRD, From A1

The rescue mission was dangerous, Laird said, but "it is my firm belief that the lives of our American servicemen held captive are in danger every day that Hanoi holds them . . ."

He added that "I have not faced a more challenging decision since I became Secretary of Defense" than whether to recommend the rescue effort.

Even though the raid failed to bring back any American prisoners, Laird said that now the men still locked up in North Vietnam and their families back home "know that they are not forgotten and we will not let them down."

He said he was especially influenced by what recently released American prisoners had told him about the state of their comrades still held by Hanoi.

There are 459 Americans believed imprisoned in North Vietnam. The Pentagon said yesterday that within the last two weeks it had received the names of 17 of them who died in captivity.

Six of the names were given to the United States through "unofficial sources" Nov. 13, the Pentagon said, and the 11 others Monday—two days after the raid against Sontay.

Laird denies that the seven hours of bombing over the weekend in North Vietnam's panhandle represented a return to the full-scale bombing called off Nov. 1, 1968. But he said he would recommend going back to intensive bombing if Hanoi sent "a major force" across the DMZ.

Short of such full scale actions against Hanoi, Laird hinted that more precision raids might be launched against prison camps. "We will take rather unusual means to see that these men are returned as free Americans," he told the Fulbright committee.

In defending the Sontay raid as a well-thought-out one, Laird said there was no way to know the American prisoners were gone because "we have not been able to develop a camera which can see through rooftops."

The theme of the criticism by members of the Foreign Relations Committee was not directed against the men who performed the rescue mission but against the policy makers who ordered it.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), for example, said "I worry about what effect" the prison raid and punitive bombings "will have on our negotiating position in Paris."

Unless the United States manages "to negotiate our way out" of the Vietnam war, Symington told Laird, "we really will be back where we started from."